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UM conference showcases top undergraduate research

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NEWS RELEASE

April 11, 2007

Contact: Jim McKusick, UMCUR chair and UM Davidson Honors College dean, 243-2541, dhc@umontana.edu.

UM CONFERENCE SHOWCASES TOP UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

MISSOULA –

University of Montana senior Kelly Hopping contends we spend most of our time in buildings, so architecture should be environmentally friendly and meaningful representations of who we are.

In fact, she recently took a scholarship-funded trip to Morocco, Spain and Switzerland -- studying significant structures such as cathedrals and building courtyards -- to learn ways to instill more "soul" into modern American architecture.

Sound interesting? Well, Hopping will be among the scores of undergraduate scholars presenting their work at the UM Conference on Undergraduate Research (UMCUR), which takes place Friday, April 13, on the third floor of the University Center. All events are free and open to the public.

UM's vice president for research and vice president for academic affairs have sponsored UMCUR for the past seven years to recognize and celebrate undergraduate scholarship. Jim McKusick, conference chair and dean of the Davidson Honors College, said about 100 posters and oral sessions will be presented.

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“This has got to be one of the biggest and best undergraduate research conferences in the United States,” McKusick said. “Undergraduate research is an important endeavor for both students and faculty, as it allows for mentoring and student engagement in all disciplines.”

The event will be held in conjunction with the sixth annual Rocky Mountain GeoDays conference, which allows geoscience students to share their research.

After an 8:45 a.m. welcome in the UC Theater, oral sessions will be held from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. A poster session runs from 3 to 4 p.m., and awards will be presented at 5:30 p.m. to the top posters in the following categories: fine arts, humanities, social sciences, life sciences and physical sciences.

Keynote speaker Rebecca Bendick Kier, a UM geosciences assistant professor, will present “Kashmir 2005: Earthquakes and Human Communities” at 12:30 p.m. in the UC Theater. Plenary speaker Sarah Halvorson, a UM geography associate professor, will lecture on “World Water Problems: Opportunities for Research and Action” at 5 p.m. in the UC Theater.

For more information, call McKusick at 243-2541. UMCUR information is available at http://www.umt.edu/ugresearch/umcur_annual.htm, and GeoDays information is at <http://www.umt.edu/geosciences/GeoDays/>.

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